CLAY GEERDES **COMIX WAVE** 142
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ANOTHER LOOK IN WALT'S VAULT

Lots of reviews about Marc Eliot's book about Walt Disney as Hollywood's Dark Prince in local Bay Area papers. The book was killed by Bantam in 1991 and if you're interested in the way conglomerates are controlling the earth these days see Jon Wiener's article "Murdered Ink," in **THE NATION**, May 31, 1993. The product is all to big corporations and anything and everything is done to protect it, including killing any critical book. The Disney Company controls through licensing. They say through licensing a book about an aspect of the company they can check and make sure the facts are correct. They get to see the manuscript and approve everything before it goes to press. So why did Bantam drop Eliot's bio of Walt? The company has a big Disney contract that might have been in jeopardy. Is anything more sacred than the Disney image? What if Sinead O'Conner had torn a picture of Mickey Mouse or, horrors, Walt himself, in half on Saturday Night Live? Would she ever eat lunch in that town again?

I haven't read Eliot's book yet so I can only react to what has been passed along second hand by various writers, but it looks like the writer did a hatchet job a la Kitty Kelley. It's my feeling that Walt Disney, whatever his personal failings, did a lot more good for everyone than evil. I enjoyed all the early animated cartoons and features. Grew up with them. I know they exist because Disney was strong enough to keep the company together long enough to make them. Anyone who thinks **SNOW WHITE** would have been what it is without Walt is mistaken. He held the studio together and kept hundreds of people employed during the worst depression this country ever experienced. It was Walt who conceived and created Disneyland, no one else. Now there are those who have not seen **SNOW WHITE** or been to Disneyland and care nothing about animation or fantasy and they have their reward, but for those of us who love the art and the fantasy and enjoy annual visits to Disneyland or Disney World, Walt has a special place in our thought. I have read all the books about him to date and I know as much as anyone about his life and work and when I see someone like Eliot saying absurd and insulting things in print I have to reply. Most of it sounds like bullshit to me. Disney an FBI informant? I doubt that Walt had any more contact with J. Edgar Hoover than Shirley Temple or Elvis Presley. Hoover was a celebrity hound and he got his picture taken with anyone who was in the limelight. Walt was a workaholic, putting in 16 or more hours a day at his Hollywood studio. Animation is long hard work. When was Walt supposed to be doing all this spying for Hoover? Walt an illegitimate child? Then how is it he looks just like his Dad, Elias? Look at the photos. He and Roy both look like their dad.

I think what bothers me about this biography is the same thing that bugs me about a lot of the things that are being written about creative people these days. *The publishers are too goddamned lazy to check the facts and too eager to put anything and everything sensational into print so they can rake in the profits.* Truth doesn't mean anything to them. Writers like Kitty Kelley make up intimate conversations between real people, conversations they could not possibly know, and present them to the public as the real thing. Tabloid lies have moved into the book industry. Sure, writers lie. When a writer claims he interviewed 3 or 4 THOUSAND!! people I know s/he's a liar. I've been a working writer for over thirty years and I doubt that I have interviewed more than a few hundred people and only some of these in depth. What a joke. Some of these people put out a book in two years and make those absurd claims. There are only 365 days in a year. Am I supposed to believe there are writers who can interview three or four people a day every day of the year? Bullshit. It takes two or three weeks *to set up* an interview with someone who is known and that person is often on a PR campaign for a book or film or their press rep says No.

You have to be careful when writing about real people, particularly if they are still alive. If you quote someone else's quote you don't now the original was correct. Well, *he said he said*--no sale. Each fact has to be checked with a note or a phone call and few people take the time to do this. Deadline pressure prevails and what goes to print is more often fiction than fact.

I'm not uncritical of the Disney world. The kid in me loves all that crap, while the adult says, yes, but look at this sexist practice and that reactionary social attitude and where are the Asian and Black people, etc. Nor am I naive about Walt. He was as human as the rest of us. He drank. He chain-smoked. He drove his employees. He got revenge against those who went on strike against him in the early forties. He was a master at the game of capitalism and he was one of America's biggest success stories. Had he been a failure, we wouldn't be talking about him. A writer like Eliot would have no incentive to attack him and try to assassinate his character.

I appreciate what Walt Disney did. He shared his ideas with everyone. His studio produced the best animation and set the standard for everyone else. I've always had a good time in Disneyland, even those times when I've written satirical articles about it. I saw Walt one time. It was in 1956. He was walking down Main Street with a couple of businessmen. The people walking nearby weren't paying any attention to him. I was in uniform. Just another sailor walking toward Tomorrowland to listen to Glady's Knight and the Pips who were scheduled to perform that afternoon.

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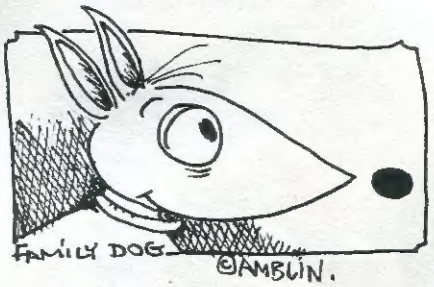
FAMILY DOG

When I saw the first *FAMILY DOG*, one of the *AMAZING STORIES* series, a couple of years back, I laughed all the way through. A great cartoon. Inspired. But the *FAMILY DOG* series is more than disappointing; it is a slow-paced dud, a total bore. I didn't laugh once during the first two episodes. *Dog Days of Summer* opened with a nice dream sequence of flying dogs, but it went on too long and lacked clarity. Whose idea was it not to attach the nose to the dog? Very stupid. Looks like he's pushing a turd around onscreen. In *Party Animal* the Bart Simpson clone burns down the family home. This is funny? Seen in an area where over 3,500 homes burned in a fire storm, this cartoon is in the worst taste I can imagine. The house is burning down and the parents stand around making wisecracks? Firemen ridiculed and acting like clods. A woman trying to save the living room carpet in a burning house. A father whose only thought is to get his laz-e-boy out on the lawn. Get real. This shit is insulting and stupid. The crew is advised to go back and study *GERALD McBOING BOING* and the other UPA cartoons from which this style is derived.



Vincent T. Hamlin

C-19-93

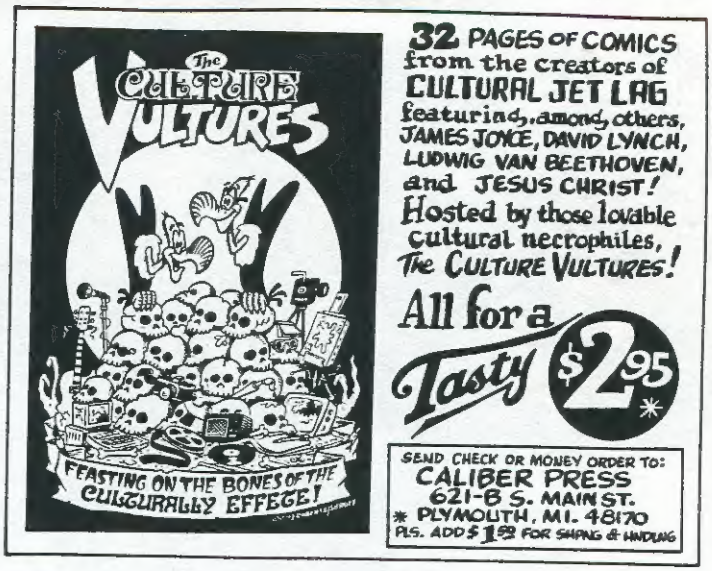
Spring Hill, Fla.

Vincent T. Hamlin, who created the popular cartoon strip "Alley Oop" after he had been thrown out of art class, died Monday. He was 93.

Alley Oop, a mesomorphic caveman, rode into the comics astride Dinny the dinosaur nearly 60 years ago. He still appears in 700 newspapers around the world, with Oola, his heartthrob, as well as King Guz, Queen Umpateedie, Grand Vizier Foozy and other inhabitants of the Kingdom of Moo.

Mr. Hamlin, who also had worked as a newspaper reporter and photographer, retired from "Alley Oop" in 1971, when Dave Graue took over the strip. He was joined by another cartoonist, Jack Bender, last year.

New York Times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Cedric Shabazz and Roger Bates told reporter Lisa Stone-Norman that Ice-T stole their idea after they gave him some of their *BLACK SAVIOR* comic books at an Oakland concert, September 12, 1992. They allege the cover of Ict-T's **HOME INVASION** album is too similar to the concept of *BLACK SAVIOR*. Looks like a legal battle coming up. [See Oakland **TRIBUNE**, 7/28/93, p. B-5.]

Southeby's got $82.5 mil for Van Gogh's *Portrait of Dr. Gachet* and 26.8 mil for Cezanne's *Still Life With Apples* this year. That's in case you were curious about what the rich do with their money.

It's now a misdemeanor to go naked in Berkeley. For the past year or so we have been treated with the nudeness of several people from a theater company, most of them past the prime of youth and lacking in the aesthetics department. The nude thing began with a young guy named Martinez who took off his clothes in Sproul Plaza on the UC campus and began to attend his classes in the altogether. Police learned they could only arrest him if someone complained. So he strolled around town and made the news and became famous as the Naked Guy. Alas, he is now performing an illegal act and must keep his shorts on. So far, however, he has ignored the law and no one has bothered him. He did go to court once and when he showed up naked the judge found him in contempt but he was only reprimanded. Santa Rita is full of drug cases and there is no room for a local nudist. I think people who are bothered by nudity should take baths with their clothes on and shave blindfolded. They always talk about the kids. Kids aren't bothered by nude people. They just giggle. To my knowledge, there is very little crime in nudist camps and way too much of it in cities where everyone is dressed to the teeth.

WE ARE THE WEIRD is no longer. Joe Bob Briggs calls his zine **THE JOE BOB REPORT** now. $3 from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. The latest issue discusses Rue McClanahan's early sex movies *5 MINUTES TO LOVE* and *HOLLYWOOD AFTER DARK*. She played a junkyard nymphomaniac. Even Golden Girls get the blues. Joe Bob is on Fox tv now. Check out **FRONT PAGE** on your local channel.

President 7/31/93 thanks boy for rescuing him in comic

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YORKTOWN, N.Y. — Move over Superman. Here comes Bodyman, the creation of a 6-year-old boy whose latest exploit is saving President Clinton from a dastardly plot.

Christopher Sarro proudly displayed a thank you letter Thursday from Clinton.

The story features Christopher's regular evildoers, the Fearsome Force, which includes Polluter, Smoker, Al K. Hall, Lex Liquor and Stranger.

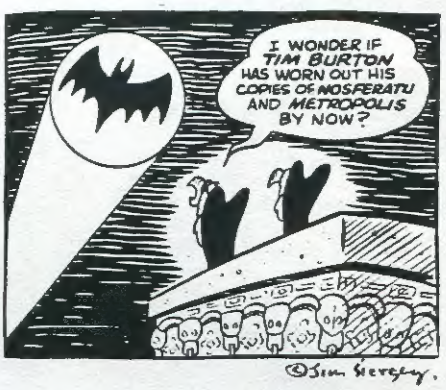
The plot is to kidnap Clinton and turn the world into a place where kindergartners are allowed to use drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, and to litter and pollute.

But Bodyman, his muscles bulging through his green outfit with a big yellow B on the chest, saves the day. His main power source is love, Christopher said, but he never goes anywhere without a banana or carrot on his hip.

On June 1, Christopher sent a letter and a video of himself displaying his colored comic to Clinton. "Don't worry, Mr. President. You get saved," Christopher said on the tape.

In a letter dated July 14, Clinton thanked him and urged him to help create a better future by "working hard in school, avoiding drugs, protecting the environment and treating others with respect."

The Culture Vultures have their own book. More of the wit and humor of Tom Roberts and Jim Siergey. See their ad this issue.



Employee's comic book skewers postal officials

Aug 3 '93

WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — Last November, when Susan J. Zapolski, a research analyst at Postal Service headquarters, lost her job in the agency's massive reorganization, she went into a "complete depression and demoralization."

"I was very angry, frustrated that our story wasn't being told," she said last week.

After two months of anguish, Zapolski took pen in hand and began to draw.

Every night at her Arlington, Va. home, Zapolski would draw.

When Zapolski finally put her pen down early this summer, she had completed a 50-page comic book that savaged Postmaster General Marvin T. Runyon and his top aides for the way they implemented "their dastardly scheme to downsize the Postal Service."

Published under the name "Zap Comics," her book — "The Truth Behind the Reorganization" — has become something of a bestseller, an underground sensation among postal workers.

Postal officials, however, are taking the animation in stride.

"We view the comic book as a satirical effort, full of exaggeration and fiction," said postal spokesman Frank Brennan.

"I don't know of anyone who took it that serious. It generated a few smiles."